

## Communities In Transition

### Participatory Design Process – Reporting Template

Please complete this report following each participatory design session (i.e. one per session) to record the key of the discussion. Please use the sections below to structure the report. If any area was not covered during the discussion, please note that in the relevant section.

Please return the completed report to [cit@cooperationireland.org](mailto:cit@cooperationireland.org) within one week of each participatory design session.

*Area:* Lurgan

*Theme:* Restorative Practices

*Date:* 24<sup>TH</sup> January 2019

*Number of attendee's:* 13

#### **1. Proposed interventions discussed to address the issues identified in Phase 1 fieldwork?**

Participants suggested there were a number of actions which should be moved on quickly to benefit the B4 communities in both Kilwilkie/Drumnamoe and Drumgask. It was also suggested that such interventions should involve individuals and organisations from Kilwilkie and Drumgask working together (*'The names are different but the issues are the same'*), with a view to learning from one another and building relationships between these communities (and particularly for residents in Drumgask to learn from those in Kilwilkie, who it was felt were further along the 'transition' narrative in terms of engaging with the police etc.). The three action points which were suggested included:

- Training/education work for community representatives and key stakeholders on what restorative justice is, how it works, its principles of non-violence, repairing relationships, empowering the community and dealing with the 'harm' caused by an incident rather than focusing solely on the perpetrator, and how victims are included in the process (initially focusing upon identified and interested members of the B4 communities in Kilwilkie and Drumgask and then broadening out to include more members of the community, with a view to building up a volunteering base which is crucial for the sustainability of restorative work in the longer-term). Several participants noted the positive impact a trip in September 2018 to Newry had on 15-20 individuals in terms of increasing knowledge of restorative justice. It was however also suggested by one participant that representatives of statutory agencies could also benefit from being educated/trained on the theme;
- Site visits for community representatives and key stakeholders from Kilwilkie/Drumnamoe and Drumgask to other locations where restorative

practice has been well-established as an alternative to paramilitary 'punishment attacks' and shootings. The Colin area of West Belfast was suggested as one positive example which could be showcased in terms of the development of restorative practices, which had also facilitated greater dialogue within this community in West Belfast, and has helped in terms of improving engagement and relationships with the PSNI;

- The delivery of sessions on restorative practice in local schools. It was noted by one participant that restorative practices required a holistic approach – in the family, schools, and community. Only addressing restorative work in one area meant that the effectiveness of the work was more limited. The example of the Boys' Model School in Belfast was briefly discussed as one where restorative work had made a positive impact on pupils, and had improved educational outcomes and increased attendance rates for some of those pupils who were at risk for exclusion from school (known 'risk' factors in terms of contributing to vulnerability to being recruited in to paramilitaries/armed groups/gangs).

The general consensus was that of the seven themes referred to throughout the CIT programme, restorative work was one of the priority areas for Kilwilkie/Drumnamoe and Drumgask – and that such work would also overlap with other thematic areas of concern (young people, community safety and policing and health and well-being).

## **2. Comments on current community capacity to address issues identified?**

Several participants felt that such actions referred to previously could be implemented very quickly and were 'ready to go'. This was particularly the case in Kilwilkie/Drumnamoe. Community representatives from Drumgask suggested that while some community representatives would be 'ready to go' in terms of participating in training/site visits, and while there was an 'appetite' in the community for such initiatives, more information and awareness on restorative work was required within the wider community in Drumgask in the longer-term to ensure wider rates of participation in programme activities.

## **3. Outcomes that participants suggested these interventions would achieve?**

- Knowledge exchange and learning between areas – viewing good practice elsewhere with a view to developing that in Kilwilkie and Drumgask
- Development of a cadre of local people/volunteers in the B4 areas who have been trained/educated on the benefits of restorative justice
- Building of relationships within and between communities (Kilwilkie and Drumgask) and between communities and statutory agencies, most notably, the PSNI
- In the longer-term it was felt that restorative work can reduce burden/cost on CJS and police

**4. How did participants suggest will we know if these projects/interventions have succeeded? (indicators/measures)**

- Increased number of community representatives and residents engaging in restorative work
- Increase in number of volunteers in local communities for restorative work
- Development of relationships and networks between communities in Kilwilkie and Drumgask
- Development of relationships and networks between communities and statutory agencies, such as the PSNI

**5. Target beneficiaries/participants of the suggested interventions?**

- Young males 14/15 and upwards at risk of coming to the attention of paramilitaries, police or CJS
- Key stakeholders and community representatives in Kilwilkie and Drumgask initially – and then widening out to include more local residents

**6. How did participants suggest these projects/interventions will build the capacity/capability in the community?**

It was suggested by several participants that the demand within the community for restorative work as an alternative to punishment attacks was there (and statutory agencies, including the PSNI were in favour of promoting restorative work), but that the community in Kilwilkie and Drumgask are starting from a relatively low base in terms of their knowledge of the concept. This was why training/education work on restorative practices initially for key stakeholders (with a view to being broadening out in to the community) was felt to be very important. Whilst it was recognised that the lack of a suitable premises/building to facilitate restorative (and community) work was a hindrance to the development of such initiatives, it was felt that this was not an insurmountable issue, and it was felt that work on promoting restorative practices as a positive alternative to the CJS and punishment attacks should begin immediately.

**7. How did participants suggest these projects/interventions will support the overall objectives of the Tackling Paramilitarism Executive Action Plan...?**

- a. Paramilitarism has no place.**
- b. Citizens and communities feel safe and confident.**
- c. The public support and have increased confidence in the justice system.**
- d. Support is available for those who wish to move away from paramilitary activity and structures.**

While this question was not addressed directly per se, the general thrust of the discussion was one which noted the positive impact which the promotion of restorative practices has in challenging the use of violence to deal with incidents of anti-social behaviour, burglary and/or drugs; and that working on

such issues which are of concern to local people can ultimately help to build and sustain relationships with statutory agencies, such as the PSNI. Such work can also improve the confidence of individuals in feeling safer in their local communities, and highlight that there are alternatives to the CJS which may benefit victims, perpetrators and the community.

### **8. Any dependencies identified by participants?**

It was felt that local individuals and organisations had to be trained and upskilled in the area of restorative practices – but that they could learn from where this had worked elsewhere in the north. Such a consortia, which would involve those with the skills to deliver training on restorative justice, alongside local organisations, was felt to be crucial to ensuring that the CIT programme had sustainability in the B4 areas in Lurgan and Drumgask.

It was believed that there needed to be movement and progress on this area – and soon. Delays in the process could result in increased apathy towards the programme.

### **9. Any risks identified by participants?**

In general, two key risks were identified by participants. Firstly, that any delay in the CIT programme moving forwards would result in a loss of momentum and increase apathy in the community that this programme is little different from others and just a ‘talking shop’. This was noted alongside the delay between phases 1 and 2 of the CIT programme – with these PDP events being held one year after the initial consultations. It was felt that there needed to be a drive to implement some ‘quick wins’ to allow people to see some practical outcomes of the CIT programme on the ground.

The second key risk identified was one of raising community expectations too early – and then not being able to deliver on them. This was discussed within the context of a disagreement within the room on the timing of holding a public meeting in the community on restorative practice. While one participant felt that a meeting should be held in the near future to gauge community attitudes towards the potential for restorative practices, another participant suggested it would be preferable to do some ground/preparatory work on restorative justice in the community first - so you could go back to the community with something concrete. The argument here was that it was very difficult to stand at the front of a room in a public meeting and tell the local community you are ‘going to do something’, without it looking like a political stunt/politicking. Restorative practitioners in the room also suggested that it was important to engage with key stakeholders first before the wider community – as ‘if you go to the community half-cocked, you’ll get shot down’.

### **10. Any other comments made by participants?**

- One participant noted that conversations had been happening ‘for a while’ on the potential for developing restorative work in the areas – but that there now needed to be tangible progress which people on the ground can see working.

- One political representative suggested that the 'right delivery partner' on the ground was crucial to the successful implementation of any restorative work.
- The lack of a building/space for delivering community and restorative work was again noted as it had been during Phase 1 of the research. However, the lack of a premises was not viewed as an insurmountable issue, and it was suggested that work on the ground on restorative practice should begin nonetheless.
- One participant queried why restorative work had not been developed in Kilwilkie and Drumgask to the same extent as in other nationalist and republican communities across the north. This individual suggested that the lack of suitable premises did not fully explain why restorative work has to date been under developed in the area.
- One Ngo representative noted that when they first started in West Belfast in the late 1990s, the focus was on improving the lives of local residents – and dealing with issues that the community wanted addressed. This in turn led to dialogue within the community between various organisations such as sports clubs, community organisations, youth groups, women's groups, political parties etc. and built relationships internally within the community. The community in turn were then able to develop relationships with statutory organisations such as the PSNI. It was noted however that restorative work cannot be 'forced' upon a community – it is not about picking a community, but about a community saying they want restorative work.
- One participant from Drumgask noted the lack of representation from Craigavon at the PDP meetings and suggested that they feel as if they are 'on their own'.
- A representative from Drumgask felt that legacy issues had to be addressed in the area – particularly in the aftermath of the mobile shop shooting of 1991 – it was felt that 28 years on, 'we are not starting to heal yet as a community.'
- It was also perceived that some residents in Drumgask were still 'scared' to be seen to speak out or to engage with the PSNI given the presence of 'dissident' republican organisations in the area.
- Several participants believed that in recent years there were relatively low numbers of paramilitary shootings in Lurgan and Drumgask – but that restorative work was still needed in the area.
- One participant noted that the long-term goal is to secure a neutral, appropriate venue for community work in Kilwilkie/Drumnamoe – given the difficulties in accessing rooms in the North Lurgan Community Centre which are usually booked out for sports classes – or are generally not fit for purpose. Another individual suggested that perhaps statutory agencies could assist in terms of providing venues for training.
- One participant questioned why South Lurgan was not involved in the CIT process – and suggested that was an oversight which should be addressed.

**11. Is a further follow-up workshop required? Please provide details.**

A further workshop within the parameters of PDP was not discussed – however, as noted, there were differences in opinion as to whether a public meeting on the topic should be convened prior to work beginning on restorative practices in the area (or after). While one individual came out in favour of the former, at least 2/3 participants were in favour of beginning the process and then having something tangible to take to the wider community.